

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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Curriculum and Texts at Ten-Year School

1. All classes in the Ostashkov and Gorodomlya ten-year schools, as well as in other Ostashkov schools, were conducted on a co-educational basis. [ ] male and female students of secondary schools in the larger cities attended separate classes, but this would have been senseless in such a small town as Ostashkov (population about 20,000). In general, classes were not overcrowded at the Ostashkov school. There was no distinct shortage of school teachers or classroom space, although it was true that some of the lower classes [grades one to seven] attended school in shifts. 25X1
2. During the seventh grade, [ ] taught Russian language and literature, history (ancient history and history of the Middle Ages), Soviet constitution, algebra, geometry, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, a foreign language, and drawing. German was primarily taught as a foreign language at the Ostashkov ten-year school, but this was probably only the result of a shortage of qualified teachers in other modern languages. [ ] secondary school students in large cities were free to choose either French, German, or English as a course of study. 25X1
3. Courses taught in the eighth grade were the same as those in the preceding grade with the exception that the Soviet constitution was dropped, anatomy was taught instead of biology, and trigonometry was added. General European history during the Middle Ages was taught during the first semester and Russian history up to the time of Peter the Great was taught in the second semester. 25X1
4. The course of studies during the ninth grade remained essentially the same with the exception that Darwinism was taught in place of anatomy. Russian literature from the beginning of the 19th century to Chekhov was the subject matter of [ ] literature course in the ninth grade, whereas in the eighth grade [ ] Russian literature from its beginnings to approximately the beginning of the 19th century. History instruction also progressed chronologically. One semester was devoted to Russian history covering the period from Peter the Great to 1905 and modern European history constituted the second semester. 25X1
5. In the tenth grade, geography and Darwinism were dropped and astronomy added. History instruction covered Russian and Soviet history from 1905 to the present day. [ ] the only recent change in the Soviet secondary school curriculum was the introduction of courses in psychology and logic for the ninth and tenth grades, respectively. 25X1
6. Boys attending the tenth grade of the Ostashkov school were required to take a course in military training while girls attended classes in gymnastics. The two hours a week devoted to military training consisted of close-order, extended-order drill and [ ] some theoretical instruction. [ ] 25X1

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Most of the boys who completed the tenth grade were too busy the following summer studying for university entrance examinations to take part in any military training.

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8. Postwar Soviet cultural purges had reverberations in the classrooms [redacted]. Although texts on Russian and Soviet literature were considerably altered as a result of the changes in the Party line, [redacted] one specific case of such editing. Some new Party decree brought about a change in the official interpretation of the character Bazarov in Turgenev's novel Father and Son. The pertinent passage [redacted] on Russian literature was crossed out [redacted] as that material was outdated.

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9. [redacted] the role of the Communist Party has been stressed more in history courses in recent years. History teachers were informed that the Party had not been given enough emphasis in previous instruction and were called upon to correct this error.

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10. [redacted] at the time of the Lysenko purge, [redacted] it brought about a cessation of the teaching of biology in Soviet secondary schools for one year. During this period, a new text was prepared and all teachers were required to attend courses on the new biology line.

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#### Teachers and Teaching Methods at Ten-Year School

11. There was no typical teacher at the Ostashkov school. Teachers ranged in age from 25 to 50 and included both recent graduates of vuzy /vuz - higher educational institution/ and teachers of many years' experience. There was almost an equal number of men and women teachers in the upper classes.

12. According to Soviet regulations, teachers who had graduated from a seven-year school and who had completed two or three years of schooling at a secondary pedagogical institute were allowed to teach only the first three grades. Teachers who had completed a ten-year school and three years at a higher pedagogical institute were allowed to teach classes up to and

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including the seventh grade. Those who had completed their full secondary education as well as five years at a higher pedagogical institution were authorized to teach all grades in a ten-year school. These regulations were followed at the Ostashkov school; that is, all teachers in the upper classes (grades eight to ten) had completed a five-year course of studies at a higher pedagogical institute.

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17. Students were not allowed to ask questions during a teacher's lecture but were allowed to raise points after it had been completed.

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18. [redacted] no evidence [redacted] that the Soviet students tended to take any other line in their thinking than that put forth by their teachers. If a student by chance asked a question which varied from the Party line, he was immediately corrected by his teacher. However, such questions were the exception rather than the rule. The average Soviet student had no

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experience which would lead him to think that educational material could be otherwise than that presented in his school. Secondly, a student would not dare to ask any questions indicating a disbelief of Communist ideology, as persistent behavior of this type would undoubtedly have given him a black mark on his record.

19. As indicated above, discipline was very strict in the Ostashkov school. Not only was a student forbidden to ask questions out of turn but he was required to stand up when a teacher entered or left the classroom and when he asked a question.

Aims, Methods, and Effectiveness of Political Indoctrination

20. The Ostashkov and Gorodomlya schools attempted to inculcate their students with nothing more and nothing less than the Party line, and Communist ideology in all its facets. Although ideological or political questions were emphasized in courses closely related to this matter (history and the Soviet constitution), it was also true that the Party line was brought into every other course in one way or other. For example, it was particularly noteworthy that Soviet claims to Russian and Soviet priority in the field of science were given great attention in courses on physics, chemistry, and biology.

21. Both Communist ideology and Russian nationalism were emphasised. However, it is difficult to divide the two, to determine which was given greater emphasis, as the two were made to appear as identical. That is, Russian patriotism and the great events in Russian history were identified with furthering the cause and the development of Communism. However, it is probably true that when dealing with such phases of Russian history as the reign of Peter the Great or the Napoleonic Wars, nationalistic aspects of these periods were emphasized more than their contribution to Communism.

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22. No set form for honoring or worshipping Stalin was followed at the Ostashkov school. For example, no ritual was held at the beginning of each school day. But it is interesting to note that a picture of Stalin was a "must" in every classroom and that, in most classrooms, banners and placards quoting phrases from Stalin were hung on the wall. Stalin's name was brought into every course in connection with almost every positive achievement of Soviet society. For example, when talking about the successful completion of a new factory, he was always given credit for this achievement.

23. [redacted] these efforts to glorify Stalin, approximating deification, made a very favorable impression on the Soviet students. Tears would well into the eyes of many students at the mention of Stalin's name. Some girls were almost in ecstasy when talking about him.

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24. With the obvious exception of Lenin, no other Soviet leader was given any special emphasis or credit. [redacted] It is true that the pictures of many prominent contemporary political leaders were hung in every classroom, but no particular leader was singled out for special attention.

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25. [redacted] instruction followed exactly the official propaganda line appearing in the Soviet press in describing life in the United States and its national policies. America was pictured as the land of oppression, the prototype of capitalist countries exploiting the masses, a nation where national minorities are oppressed, a country with aggressive intentions towards the Soviet Union. Although other capitalist countries received their share of abuse, the United States was presented as the leader of capitalism and was singled out for special attention. However, it is noteworthy that the American people were not condemned. It was considered that they still could be saved from the effects of capitalism. This subject was not only discussed in geography, which was the logical place for it, but also in many other courses, as a means of demonstrating the superiority of Soviet society. [redacted] this line was also accepted as truthful by the students because, as in the case with all other phases of Soviet propaganda, they had no way of knowing otherwise, no means of comparison. [redacted] 25X1

26. [redacted] 25X1

27. Religion was not systematically attacked in classes at the Ostashkov school but was generally ignored. However, when the subject would come up it was always abused [redacted]. Although the Soviet constitution provides for religious freedom, it was obvious [redacted] this was not the case, as Soviet students were directly discouraged from attending church. One year, some Soviet students at the Ostashkov school attended church at Easter. There was an uproar when the school director and the teachers found out about it. The teachers raised this point in school and stated [redacted] that students who wanted to graduate should not attend church. They then launched into a vilification of the church and its ideals. [redacted] 25X1

28. [redacted] Soviet youth on the whole are in no way interested in religion and [redacted] this is a closed issue for them. [redacted] 25X1  
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29. Although [redacted] the Soviet school system is successful in its political indoctrination efforts, it is noteworthy that in courses related to political subjects, particularly history, the Soviet students showed little interest and certainly no enthusiasm. They simply were not interested in history, especially tenth-grade history, which dealt with the history of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union. The Soviet students by that time had probably heard or read the same thing a thousand times or more in their Komsomol meetings and classroom instruction. Perhaps this fact explains this attitude. At any rate, the students always looked forward to tenth-grade history class with distaste. It was an hour for letter writing and dozing. [redacted] 25X1

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Komsomol Membership and Activities

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about 75% in Ostashkov were Komsomol members. It is noteworthy that those students who were not members of the organization were evidently under no direct pressure to join. Membership was voluntary. This is in contrast to conditions in the GDR, where all students were compelled to join the FDJ.

31. However, it was true that Komsomol members enjoyed certain advantages.

Komsomol members were given preferential treatment in applying for entrance into a yuz. Grades made on entrance examinations were generally the deciding factor. That is, most yuz applicants were accepted on the basis of merit. However, it is very likely that, when competition for entrance into a higher educational institution was keen, Komsomol functionaries or members would undoubtedly be given preference over other applicants with equal academic and entrance examination records.

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Social Aspects of Soviet EducationSeven- and Ten-Year Schools

32. Universal, compulsory seven-year education was introduced after the war in the Ostashkov area.

There was some talk at the Ostashkov school that, with the establishment of universal seven-year education, the next step would be the introduction of compulsory ten-year education in urban areas.

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33. The only requirement for entrance into the eighth grade was the successful passing of the final seventh-grade examinations. These examinations were no easier or more difficult than final examinations given in earlier grades. In fact, the teachers made a special effort to get their pupils through this final elementary school examination, as they wished to see a maximum number of pupils graduate from the seven-year school. The only distinction attached to the seventh grade final examination was the fact that successful examinees received certificates entitling them to enroll in the upper grades of a ten-year school or in a specialized secondary educational establishment.

99% of the seventh-grade pupils pass their examinations.

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34. The social composition of the upper classes of the Ostashkov school, was quite mixed. Children from all elements of Soviet society were represented there. It was not noticeable that children of the intelligentsia were more strongly represented than other social groups. It is true that no children of kolkhoz families attended the upper grades, but it is probable that kolkhoz children from neighboring villages attended a ten-year school closer to their homes.

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35. A few students in the upper three grades of the Ostashkov ten-year school were exempted from paying the general tuition of 150 rubles per year.

children of needy families or deceased war veterans were aided in this manner.

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more and more children were attending and completing their secondary education [grades eight to ten] as they realized that this and further training is necessary for professional advancement. Realization of this desire had been facilitated by the introduction of compulsory seven-year education and by the fact that stipends were easily obtained by a yuz student who exerted himself a little in his studies.

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75% of the pupils successfully completing the seventh grade at that school went on to enter the eighth grade. Graduates of numerous seven-year schools in the Ostashkov area also entered the upper classes of [ten-year school, as] it was the only one in the town. However, it is noteworthy that,

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there was only one class of 35 in the tenth grade, whereas there were two parallel classes in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades and three parallel classes in the fifth and probably other lower grades. Each of these parallel classes had approximately 35 or 40 pupils. This relatively larger number of students in the lower grades was probably a partial result of the newly-realized, compulsory seven-year education and of population disruptions brought about by the war. However, this is obviously not a complete explanation, as upper grades of the ten-year school accepted graduates from the numerous seven-year schools in the area. It is possible that better students or those having the intention of continuing their education attended the first seven grades.

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All those who took the examinations passed them and received their secondary school certificate.

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Final examinations were held once a year in each grade, the tenth-grade final examinations being identical with the graduation examinations. A separate examination was administered for almost every course. All final tests were conducted according to the "ticket" (bilet) system. Approximately two months before the examinations were given, [ ] about 30 "tickets" for each examination, each "ticket" containing three questions. Every student received the identical "tickets".

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the 90 or so questions for each examination covered the substance of the entire year's course.

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40. A commission was present in the classroom on examination days, thus preventing teachers from helping weak students to pass. Each student selected one "ticket" [redacted] turned face downward, and was required to answer these questions.

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41. No individual students or groups of students were given preferential treatment or were discriminated against in these examinations. Specifically, Komsomol members were not favored and minority groups were not subject to discrimination.

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[redacted] A teacher's success, of course, was measured in terms of the percentage of his students which passed the examinations, but he was unable to influence the outcome of examinations once they were in progress. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, most students [redacted]

passed these yearly tests. It was certainly the goal of the student administration to have every student pass. There is no intentional selection-out of students as in the case of some German gymnasium. In fact, [redacted] the examinations were purposely drawn up in such a way as to allow every student to complete them successfully.

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42. A student was required to have at least a "three" on each examination in order to graduate into the next higher grade. A student with no more than two "two's" was allowed to make up these examinations the following fall. Students with three "two's" or more were "flunked" and were required to repeat the entire grade.

43. A knowledge of Communist ideology and the current propaganda line was a prerequisite for passing these examinations, as many courses were based almost entirely on this subject matter.

44. Furthermore, it was true that, if a student knew his historical facts but misinterpreted an act of Lenin, then he could count on receiving a "two" or a "one".

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#### Higher Educational Institutions

45. Almost all [redacted] who graduated from the tenth grade entered a higher educational institution of one type or another. A few graduates who wished to enter a vuz were unable to do so because of financial difficulties. As State stipends were insufficient to enable independent existence, almost all students who continued with their education were forced to live with, or to be supported partially by, their families. And, of course, all students attending a vuz without the aid of a State stipend were forced to depend on their families for financial support.

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46. Entrance examinations for higher educational institutions were administered strictly on the basis of merit. As in the case of elementary and secondary school examinations, an applicant was required to make at least a "three" on each

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examination in order to pass. No examination could be repeated or made up. [redacted] the only preferential treatment given to Komsomol members or other favored groups occurred when competition for entering a particular educational establishment was especially stiff, when more applicants successfully passed entrance examinations than could be accepted.

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47. A knowledge of Communist ideology was of course an important factor in the successful completion of entrance examinations. Furthermore, applicants for all types of higher educational institutions were examined in Russian language and literature.

48. Gold and silver medalists were not required to take entrance examinations and automatically received a stipend if accepted by a vuz.

49. It should be noted that merely passing an examination was no guarantee that an applicant would be accepted by a vuz. Frequently, there were more successful examinees than the quota of new students allowed for each institution. The number of applicants relative to entrance quotas was particularly high for some vuzy (universities, particularly departments of mathematics, chemistry, and physics) and low for others (pedagogical institutes and military schools).

50. An exceptionally high percentage of the boys [redacted] went on to study chemistry. Perhaps the proximity of the Leningrad Tekhnicheskii-Khimicheskii Institut was the explanation. (Although Ostashkov was located no farther from Moscow than from Leningrad, it traditionally looked to Leningrad as its cultural center.) There, students with grades of "three" or better on entrance examinations were given stipends. Also, many boys went on to attend a military-naval institute in Leningrad. It had a large quota for new students and there was little competition for these available spots. However, these were boys who normally could not gain entrance to other vuzy. Furthermore, students at this naval institute received higher stipends than usual.

51. Most of the girls [redacted] entered pedagogical institutes in Leningrad and showed a preference for history and modern languages.

52. All vuz students who received a "four" or better in each of their entrance examinations received a state stipend on entering these institutions. Furthermore, as mentioned before, all gold and silver medalists automatically received a stipend. Students who received a "three" or better in each examination received stipends in a few vuzy [redacted] (the Tekhnicheskii-Khimicheskii Institut and a mining institute in Leningrad). The amount of these stipends varied both according to grades and to the institute in question, with higher grades on entrance and subsequent examinations bringing, of course, higher stipends. Stipends were also progressively increased with each year at a vuz.

53. The continuance of stipends depended on a student's performance in semi-annual examinations administered during the course of

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his studies at a vuz. At most institutes, a student lost his stipend if he received anything less than a "four" on one examination. A student was permitted to make up an examination if he received no more than one "three". In this case, however, he was required to submit a special application to the university authorities to demonstrate his need of financial assistance.

54. Students without outside financial help had great difficulty in eking out an existence. Not only were stipends very small but the students [redacted] were also required to pay tuition fees. Students in these circumstances were so poor that they could not even afford to eat at the special student cafeterias where low price meals were featured.

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55. Many students "flunked out" of higher educational institutions, especially in the first year. In some cases this was a case of financial pressures. They received a "three" or less on an examination and therefore were no longer eligible to receive a State scholarship. In other cases, they simply "flunked out" on grades. That is, they received a "two" or less on one or more examinations.

56. Five German students from Ostashkov were attending Soviet vuzy [redacted]. Of these, four were repatriated and are now living in East Berlin. The fifth student, the son of Chief Engineer Wolf, was also repatriated to the GDR but he returned to complete his studies at Leningrad University.

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Other Political and Social Attitudes in the Soviet Union

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58. [redacted], the great majority of [redacted] students in the Ostashkov ten-year school supported the present Soviet government without reservation. [redacted] the average Soviet youth of 17 is convinced that everything is fine and proper in the USSR, that life is better in the Soviet Union than anywhere else in the world. [redacted]

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[redacted] However, it is obvious that these students, if dissatisfied with the present regime, would never have expressed such feelings [redacted]

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59. Except for the Komsomol, there seemed to be no group or social class which was more for or against the regime than other groups. Most Komsomol members appeared to be in the organization because of political convictions and not because of professional or social advantages which might be gained by such membership. The Komsomol members [redacted] were always the first to

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volunteer for special assignments. For example, they always volunteered [redacted] to write on subjects of political and social significance.

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60. [redacted] no particular aspect of Soviet society [redacted] met with more than normal support or approval on the part of the younger generation. [redacted] students expressed pride in such generalities as their fatherland, in the fact that the USSR is a socialist state, the first socialist state in history, and were proud of Stalin. After all, what else could be expected from 17-year-old boys and girls who have never seen or heard of anything else than life in the Soviet Union, who had no means of comparing conditions there with life abroad?

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61. [redacted] Soviet youth viewed foreign affairs in exactly the same light as presented in official Soviet propaganda.

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[redacted] That is, they pictured the West as an area of capitalist exploitation of workers, rigged elections, and warmongering. All in all, they had a very primitive conception of the West.

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62. The Soviet youth had no particular fear of a new world war. However, it is noteworthy that [redacted] in Ostashkov, 1950-51, the older generation of the town was extremely fearful of a new world war. They evidently anticipated war to break out at any time, as they then began to hoard stocks of food. They dried bread, stored potatoes, etcetera. The population of the Ostashkov area suffered greatly from hunger during the war, as it is an impoverished agricultural region.

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#### Social Activities of Soviet Youth

63. [redacted] Ostashkov was essentially an agricultural center and their activities were those of a rural population. For example, [redacted] in the school was a girl whose family, like many others, owned a small plot of land. There they raised vegetable products and maintained a small flock of chickens and turkeys and a few goats. After her school day was completed at 1500 hours, this girl went home, fed the livestock, and worked in the garden. And, as she was a serious student, she did her lessons after these chores were done. In the evening, she stayed at home or occasionally attended a movie or a dance. Other students attended the voluntary "study circles" which were held in the afternoon after school hours, but they were in the minority.

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64. A few students in grades eight to ten who lived in distant villages were given quarters in a dormitory (internat) maintained by the school.

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[redacted] The conditions there can only be described as awful. The dormitory consisted of a single, large, barracks-type room. As the place was seldom heated, the students often had to stay under their bed covers in order to keep warm while doing their homework. They were also required to buy and prepare their food themselves.

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Comments: Expressed in this report are several minor though clear examples of the social qualities produced by a State system based on dogma and addicted to a growing sense of orthodoxy. Thus, the teachers at the Ostashkov school maintain strict discipline, insist on rigid adherence to the letter of a text, and emphasize the learning of facts rather than the process of learning.

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Soviet school authorities are successful in indoctrinating school children with the Party line.

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The informant indicates that an extremely high percentage [redacted] at Ostashkov successfully passed the various hurdles to higher education: graduation from a seven-year school ("99%"), entrance into the eighth grade ("75%"), successful completion of the upper grades of the ten-year school [redacted] 86%, and acceptance into a higher educational institution ("almost all"). If the last figure is assumed to be 90%, we arrive at the conclusion, (by rounding off a few figures), that 55%

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[redacted] made the grade from first grade to a vuz. Although [redacted] figures are approximations, there is obviously a basic error in these estimates. It is more than likely that far less than 75% of seventh-grade graduates entered the upper secondary school.

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